

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claim 11 and the addition of new claims 19 to 24, claims 10 and 12 to 24 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes with appreciation the acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and the indication that all copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received from the International Bureau.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the previously filed Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449 paper and cited references.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter contained in claims 11 and 12. In this regard, the Examiner will note that claim 10 has been amended herein without prejudice to include all of the limitations of claim 11, now canceled. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 10 is in condition for immediate allowance. Since claims 13 and 16 to 18 depend from claim 10, it is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are also in condition for immediate allowance.

As regards claims 14 and 15, which ultimately depend from claim 10, as more fully set forth below, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph has been obviated. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14 and 15 are in condition for immediate allowance.

Claim 12 has been rewritten herein in independent form to include all of the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 12 is in condition for immediate allowance. Since new claims 19 to 24 ultimately depend from claim 12, it is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are also in condition for immediate allowance.

III. Rejection of Claims 14 and 15 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

As regards the indefiniteness rejection of claims 14 and 15, the Examiner will note that claim 14 has been amended herein without prejudice to delete "that bear the plateau." The Examiner will further note that claim 15 has been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 14 and to change "at least crosspiece" to --at least one crosspiece--. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14 and 15 fully comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, and withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claims 10 and 13 to 18 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 10 and 13 to 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,392,487. While Applicant does not agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claim 10 has been amended herein without prejudice to include all of the limitations of claim 11, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 10, and claims 13 to 18, which ultimately depend from claim 10, are in condition for immediate allowance. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

V. Rejection of Claims 10, 13, 14 and 16 to 18 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 10, 13, 14 and 16 to 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,807,016. While Applicant does not agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claim 10 has been amended herein without prejudice to include all of the limitations of claim 11, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 10, and claims 13, 14 and 16 to 18, which ultimately depend from claim 10, are in condition for immediate allowance. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

VI. New Claims 19 to 24

New claims 19 to 24 have been added herein. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 19 to 24 add no new matter and are fully supported by the present application, including the Specification. Since claims 19 to 24 ultimately depend from claim 12, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter, it is

respectfully submitted that claims 19 to 24 are patentable over the references relied upon for at least the same reasons that claim 12 is patentable over the references relied upon.

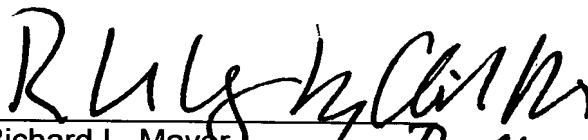
VII. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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